

Message Text

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22

ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 EB-07 ISO-00 FEA-01 AGR-05 CEA-01

CIAE-00 COME-00 DODE-00 FRB-03 H-02 INR-07 INT-05

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R 100901Z JAN 76

FM AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4444

INFO AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI

AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

AMEMBASSY DOHA

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY MANAMA

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY MUSCAT

AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

USINT BAGHDAD

C O N F I D E N T I A L KUWAIT 0141

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: ETRD, TFOR, MASS, KU

SUBJ: VIEWS OF KUWAITI FINANCE MINISTER ON US ANTI-BOYCOTT ACTIONS

SUMMARY: FIRST DIRECT CHALLENGE TO US ANTI-BOYCOTT ACTIONS BY SENIOR KUWAITI OFFICIAL EXPRESSED BY FINANCE MINISTER ATEEQI IN INTERVIEW JANUARY 8 WITH CHRISTIAN SCIENCE MONITOR. MINISTER CONDEMNS "ZIONIST MAFIA" IN US, WHICH HE ALLEGES IN CONSPIRACY TO RUIN US/ARAB RELATIONS AND BREAK BOYCOTT. CLAIMS BOTH US
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COMMERCIAL AND MILITARY SALES TO ARAB WORLD WILL BE SERIOUSLY

AFFECTED IF US PERSISTS WITH PRESENT POLICIES.

1. CHRISTIAN SCIENCE MONITOR CORRESPONDENT JOHN COOLEY BRIEFED CHARGE JANUARY 9 ON TWO-HOUR INTERVIEW HELD WITH KUWAIT FINANCE MINISTER ATEEQI JANUARY 8. COOLEY ASKED THAT EMBASSY AND DEPARTMENT HOLD ATEEQI REMARKS CAREFULLY PENDING PUBLICATION PROBABLY JANUARY 12-13.

2. ACCORDING COOLEY, ATEEQI PROVIDED IN-DEPTH BRIEFING CURRENT AND PROSPECTIVE GOK INVESTMENT, DEVELOPEMENT AND AID PROGRAMS. NOTHING NEW WAS DISCLOSED BUT COOLEY IMPRESSED BY APPARENT SINCERITY OF ATEEQI IN EXPRESSING NEED FOR OIL-PRODUCING AND INDUSTRIAL COUNTRIES TO COLLABORATE IN ASSISTING DEVELOPING WORLD. MINISTER DEFENDED VIGOROUSLY RECENT OPEC OIL PRICE RISE BUT WOULD NOT BE DRAWN OUT ON POSSIBLE FUTURE PRICE INCREASES. EXPRESSED SERIOUS KUWAITI CONCERN REGARDING DEVELOPEMENTS IN LEBANON, BUT OFFERED NO INSIGHTS INTO HOW PROBLEM COULD BE RESOLVED. ATEEQI REPORTEDLY DESCRIBED IN SOME DETAIL HS PERSONAL RESERVATIONS--NOT FOR ATTRIBUTION--CONCERNING EGYPTIAN FOREIGN POLICY. WHILE HE ACKNOWLEDGED THE NEED FOR CONTINUED ARAB FINANCIAL SUPPORT OF EGYPT, HE CLAIMED SADAT HAD MADE SERIOUS ERROR IN JOINING WITH AMERICANS AND ANTAGONIZING THE USSR. EGYPT'S NEW ALLIANCE HAD GAINED NOTHING FOR THAT COUNTRY OR THE ARAB CAUSE, BUT HAD CAUSED THE LOSS OF A PROVEN ALLY IN THE STRUGGLE AGAINST ISRAEL.

2. REMAINDER OF INTERVIEW DEVOTED EXCLUSIVELY TO DIATRIBE AGAINST USG ECONOMIC POLICIES VIS-A-VIS ARAB WORLD. ACCORDING TO COOLEY, ATEEQI HAD DETAILED KNOWLEDGE OF RECENT USG AND NEW YORK STATE ANTI-BOYCOTT LEGISLATION AND REGULATIONS. BOTH ATTRIBUTED TO EFFORTS "ZIONIST MAFIA" AND FAILURE USG TO RECOGNIZE WHERE ITS TRUE INTERESTS LIE. IN MINISTER'S VIEW, ABOVE ACTIONS HAD ONLY TWO PURPOSES: (1) TO RUIN US/ARAB RELATIONS; AND (2) TO BREAK BOYCOTT. AMERICAN PUBLIC SHOULD BE INFORMED THAT LATTER WAS IMPOSSIBLE AND FORMER NOT IN EITHER US OR ARAB INTEREST. ATEEQI CYNICAL CONCERNING PROBABLE OUTCOME GENERAL ELECTRIC COURT TEST AND VEHEMENT IN DENUNCIATION CHURCH SUB-COMMITTEE HEARINGS ON BRIBERY FOREIGN OFFICIALS WHICH HE DESCRIBED AS "SECOND US WATERGATE". OVERALL SPECTACLE OF CURRENT US SCENE WAS OF CHILD (ISRAEL) LEADING ELEPHANT (US) BY TRUNK--SOMETHING CONFIDENTIAL

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HE HAD NOT WITNESSED BEFORE OUTSIDE OF CIRCUS.

3. WARMING TO SUBJECT, ATEEQI ASSURED COOLEY THAT ARAB AUTHORITIES WOULD NOT PERMIT IMPORTS WITHOUT A CERTIFICATE OF ORIGIN. KUWAITI TENDERS WERE ISSUED ON A GLOBAL BASIS WITH ALL FREE TO PARTICIPATE, EXCEPT ISRAEL. IF THE US PEOPLE WANTED TO PAY A SPECIAL DUTY TO ISRAEL BY NOT COMPETING, THAT WAS THEIR BUSINESS, BUT THEY SHOULD NOT EXPECT SPECIAL DISPENSATIONS. MANY COUNTRIES WERE WAITING

TO TAKE THE US PLACE IN THE ARAB WORLD. PRESENT COMMERICAL AND POLITICAL PROBLEMS WERE CREATED IN THE US AND THE US MUST SOLVE THEM. WHEN QUERIED WHETHER FURTHER US ARMS SALES TO KUWAIT WERE IN JEOPARDY, ATEEQI SAID KUWAIT ALREADY LOOKING TO OTHER SUPPLIERS AND CONFIRMED RECENT PURCHASES FROM THE SOVIET UNION. MINISTER ALLEGED THAT "IF US PERSISTS IN PRESENT POLICIES, WE SOON WON'T NEED YOUR MISERABLE ARMS AT ALL".

4. COMMENT: ATEEQI HAS A REPUTATION FOR BEING A VOLATIVE CRITIC OF ALL--INCLUDING AT TIMES OF HIS OWN COLLEAGUES. HOWEVER, HIS COMMENTARY TO COOLEY IS SIGNIFICANT IN THAT IT REPRESENTS THE FIRST DIRECT "CHALLENGE" WE HAVE HEARD FROM SENIOR KUWAITI OFFICIAL OF US ANTI-BOYCOTT POLICIES. IT CONTRASTS WITH GENERALLY SUBDUE REACTION OF OTHER KUWAITIS, AND WE THINK THIS IS DUE IN PART TO ATEEQI'S PERSONALITY AND SENSITIVITY TO ARAB-ISRAELI ISSUES AND IN PART TO HIS RECOGNITION THAT COOLEY'S REPORT WILL BE PUBLISHED.

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